

# MULTICULTURAL MONITOR



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# THE MARSS TEAM

Chief Executive Officer	Dewani Bakkum
Accountant	Yepeng Wang
Administration Officers	Lauren Wilson-Bygrave Emmanuel Bovell
Settlement Services Program Officers	Niran Karaeni Chime Dema Sarah Sykes
Project Management Officer	Madhuri Sharma
Community Development Program Officer	Andrew Kazar
After School Studies and Sports Officer	Joshua Alexander
Multicultural Leadership Development Officer	Asavari Deonath
Registered Training Organisations Trainer	Karen James
Sewing and Craft Coordinator	Lynne Johnson

## BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

Chairperson	Andrew Alwast OAM
Deputy Chair	Raewyn Bastion
Treasurer	Steve Taskovski
Secretary	Mithun Alexander
Public Officer	David Ng
Board Members	Borhan Uddin Ahmed Patricia McLean Simon Kwan Kit Ng Juan de la Torre Hashmat Shafaq

## MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR



Friends,

I would like to focus my message in this newsletter on strengthening Migrant and Refugee Settlement Services (MARSS) membership base and building on our long-standing and excellent community support. The support of our members enables MARSS to remain the premier multicultural hub in Canberra and to deliver settlement services through our one stop shop models to migrants and refugees in the ACT and surrounding regions.

The MARSS Board of Management has simplified the process for joining or renewing membership, and has significantly reduced the costs to ensure that all ethnic and community organisations can access and be represented at MARSS. The new membership fee and revised fee structure is in this newsletter and we welcome all to join or renew their membership.

It is increasingly important for the multicultural community in Canberra to have a voice, and to advocate and influence Government policies so that they reflect the values of all Australians, including migrant and refugees. For example, recent changes to the citizenship text has caused some concern in the migrant community about the value placed on 'Australian Values' to the exclusion of maintaining multicultural cultures, languages and customs. By supporting bodies such as MARSS, Federation of Ethnic Community Council of Australia and Settlement Council of Australia, migrants and refugees can ensure that multiculturalism remains a proud part of Government policy in a diverse and inclusive Australia.

Andrew Alwast, Chairperson



# MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

Welcome to the latest issue of the MARSS Newsletter 2018.



A lot of exciting things have been happening in the past few months here at MARSS, with the MARSS team continuing to assist many clients in their settlement journeys in the ACT and surrounding regions. So far this year has been a very successful one.

MARSS had the exciting opportunity of launching another office in Queanbeyan earlier this year, and has been involved in celebrating many events in recent months. Some of these events included International Women's Day, World Refugee Day, and Volunteer Day. MARSS has a number of programs running which you can read about in this newsletter. There are a number of new projects which we have commenced, and will be of great benefit to the community and its members.

This is my 10th year as the Manager/CEO of MARSS, and throughout this time I have overcome a number of challenges. It has been amazing to have been given so many great opportunities and to witness all the hard work and dedication from the staff and volunteers to provide successful settlement services to all clients of MARSS. So, a big thank you to all who have contributed to the MARSS' success of services we provide. I also would like to thank my staff, volunteers and members of the Board of Management for all of their contribution and support over the years, including this year. I look forward to continuing our hard work in supporting all migrants and refugees in their settlement journeys in the ACT region and look forward to your continued support.

Dewani Bakkum, CEO



## INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

MARSS staff, clients and women from the wider Canberra community celebrated International Women's Day on 8th of March the 2018. We had cake, snacks and multi-cultural dance performances by Island Breeze of Hawaii, Kadijah Sesay performing Guinea's cultural dance, the ACT Chinese Australian Dance Association and MARSS' own dance group. We also had speeches from inspiring women who can be seen cutting the cake with our CEO. These guests were MLAs Suzanne Orr and Elizabeth Kikkert, entrepreneurs and business women Jemimah Ashleigh and Dr Nicole Sides, and successful migrants Toa Kakiari and Ami Bah.







## SPECIAL GUESTS

On February 14th, Jackson Bursill and Cassie Cohen of *Bounding Plains to Share* had a stopover in Canberra on their run from Cooktown to Melbourne to raise awareness of refugees in Australia. They shared their experiences and what motivated them to undertake this grand challenge.



## HARMONY DAY SPORTS

On 23rd March 2018, MARSS celebrated Harmony Day with a sports carnival. We had our own Harmony Sports teams made up of young clients play against other local teams in volleyball, soccer and netball. There were 8 men's futsal teams competing as well as 4 mixed volleyball teams, and a 'Come and try' game for netball. It was a day of fun and great sportsmanship, and a great success. Throughout the day, MARSS staff put on a barbecue and presented the participants with gift bags. We thank ACT Netball for their collaboration in holding such a wonderful event enjoyed by all.







# QUEANBEYAN MARSS OFFICE

MARSS is excited to announce its expansion into New South Wales. On 1st of May 2018, MARSS launched its new office at 8/166 - 168 Crawford St, Queanbeyan for our Palarang clients. This office is open from 10am to 4pm Monday to Friday and we welcome any clients who need assistance in the area.



# SCHOOL HOLIDAY PROGRAMS

In the winter holidays, we continued our successful school holiday program. On



11th of July 2018, we gave teen-age clients a break from PASS with free tickets to the cinemas. For younger children, we ran an art workshop on 20th of July 2018, with painting origami, and figure drawing.





## NATIONAL VOLUNTEER DAY

MARSS celebrated the National Volunteer Week on 25th of May 2018. MARSS lives and breathes through the valuable contribution of our generous volunteers. To recognise this, we had dance performances and dinner for our volunteers and issued them certificates of appreciation. We are so thankful to our volunteers who have helped MARSS to change the lives of hundreds of refugees!

If you are interested in volunteering at MARSS, contact us or visit our website.



## WORLD REFUGEE DAY

On 19th of June, MARSS celebrated the contributions refugees have made to Australia. Refugee Day highlights the diversity, difficulties faced, hope and strength of refugees through various types of events. Our Refugee Day function involved several of our clients speaking about their refugee journeys, a performance by MARSS' own dance class as well as speeches from our CEO, Chairman and MLA Rachel Stephen-Smith. Our CEO Dewani Bakkum also attended a Refugee Day Breakfast.





# PROGRAM UPDATES

## SETTLEMENT GRANTS PROGRAM (SGP)

MARSS has been providing casework, advocacy and referral services to eligible migrant and refugees in the ACT and surrounding region for more than thirty years. Under this program MARSS' caseworkers have provided services to 480 clients in 2017-18.

The program also holds life skill sessions to new and emerging communities throughout the year. In the last six months we have had sessions on Domestic Violence, Centrelink Services, Employment, ACTSmart Home Emergency Efficiency and Parenting.



MARSS Staff promoting our services at the ACT Multicultural Women's Expo



SGP Clients attending a ACT Health Services Information Session

## MIGRANT SETTLEMENT SERVICES (MSS)

This program provides settlement services of migrant and refugees who have been in Australia for over five years. MSS provides a large range of services similar to the SGP program and is funded by the ACT government.



## JOB READY

The Job Ready Program helps migrants and refugees obtain jobs suited to their qualifications and work experience. Clients are assigned a mentor if required to help improve their job readiness.

This program helps clients by creating an employment pathway for clients, which includes referring clients the MARSS English for Employment Program to improve their workplace English and job search skills. Clients are referred to MARSS courses as well as courses offered by other Registered Training Organisations. Referrals are also made to the Work Experience Support Program offered by the Office of Multicultural Affairs.

## COMPUTER CLASS

In partnership with the Australian National University (ANU), MARSS provides basic computer training for eligible culturally and linguistically diverse clients. The six-week course offers clients with one-on-one training to improve their computer literacy with the help of volunteers from ANU. The course teaches clients the most basic and essential skills such as accessing and browsing the internet, using word processing, sending and checking emails, using Facebook, and downloading photos. The course aims to help clients become more independent and equip them with the skills needed to stay in touch with family, or search for jobs for example.





## ROAD READY PROGRAM

The Road Ready Program at MARSS teaches its clients the essential knowledge required for students to start driving safely on roads in the ACT and the surrounding region. The course runs for 6 weeks and in that time the clients participate in interactive activities regarding road rules, road safety and essential theoretical understanding of all that driving involves. Following the end of the course, the clients are tested on their knowledge of the course and upon successful completion are then able to start driving lessons. Due to high demand for this course, bookings are essential, please contact Joshua Alexander on [pass@marss.org.au](mailto:pass@marss.org.au).



## LEARN TO DRIVE

MARSS Learn to Drive program offers driving lessons with an Accredited Driving Instructor to eligible migrants and refugees who already have their learner's licence and are working towards their provisional licence. Lessons are booked and paid for in advance and go for 50 minutes each.



## SPORTS

The Harmony Players Program Provides Migrants and Refugees the opportunity to get involved in playing Volleyball and Futsal. This program gives new migrants the opportunity to make new friends and learn new skills while settling in Australia.

Players are from diverse cultural backgrounds and the Harmony Sports Program is a great way for people to learn about other cultures, or adjust to Australia ways of life. Games are played on a weekly basis and new players are always welcome to join.



## HOME TUTOR PROGRAM (HTP)

This program matches volunteer English language tutors with migrants and refugees who are unable to attend our regular English classes. The tutors help their clients with English in their own homes.

Our tutors help our clients to improve their English skills, as well as providing them with social contact and lasting friendships. This program has proven to be of real benefit to our clients by fostering independence and diminishing social isolation.

The Home Tutor program has a constant demand for tutors, for further information about the program or to volunteer contact Sarah Sykes on [http@marss.org.au](mailto:http@marss.org.au).



## SEWING AND CRAFT CLASS

This program for MARSS clients runs on Thursday and Friday mornings from 10am to 2pm in the MARSS office. Participants meet under the guidance of Lynne Johnson, the sewing co-ordinator to learn sewing skills. The above program was initially introduced in-order to allow women the opportunity to build a social network and of course enhance their sewing and crafting skills at the same time.

Through the program, participants gain knowledge and become proficient in the use of sewing machines, over-lockers and construction techniques. Our clients also gain lasting skills and experiences on how to start and run small businesses which helps them boost their confidence while making them independent.



## ENGLISH FOR LIVING

The English for Living program offers free English classes to clients of all ages from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds who are not attending CIT or Navitas. Our clients are provided with the opportunity to learn English in an informal and friendly setting. Our volunteer English teachers dedicate their time and expertise to allow for successful and positive learning. This program in particular has proven to be of real benefit to clients as it allows for like-minded clients to challenge themselves whilst developing friendships along the way.



## ENGLISH FOR LIVING

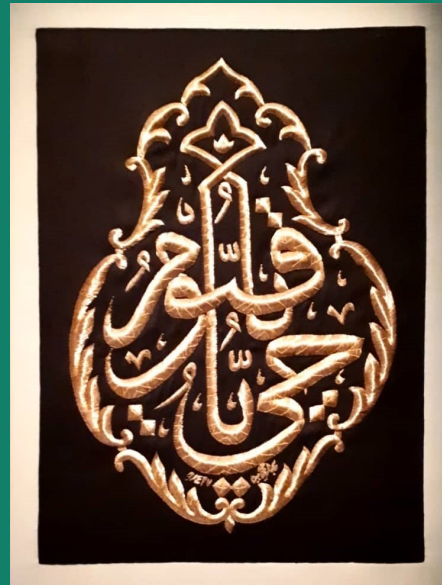
Above is a photo of students saying farewell to their longstanding teacher, Helen. MARSS thanks Helen for her contribution to English for Living classes.



## ENGLISH FOR LIVING EXCURSIONS

To celebrate the end of term, two of our English for Living Classes went on excursions on 4th of July. Judith Bongiorno's, Low Intermediate Class, went to the Canberra Museum and Gallery. They were treated to chocolate cake and a guided tour by Kay Whitney of iconic Australian artist, Sidney Nolan's *Ned Kelly* series.

Margaret Willis took her Tuggeranong Conversation Group to the Australian National Museum to see the exhibition *So That You Might Know Each Other*. The exhibition showcased the Islamic artefacts that were collected by the Catholic priests and the missionary from the Catholic Church and other Islamic Museums and kept in the Vatican Ethnographic Museum. The exhibition paints a picture of the various expressions of Islamic faith and culture around the world. Afterwards, the class went to a nearby café to discuss the exciting and interesting artefacts over a cup of coffee sponsored by MARSS.



## ENGLISH FOR EMPLOYMENT

The English for Employment Program is designed to assist migrants and refugees and asylum seekers build their English language skills to a level where they can successfully gain meaningful employment, or pursue their vocational education and training goals.

## PROGRAM FOR AFTER SCHOOL STUDIES (PASS)

PASS helps clients between the ages of 8 and 25 who are from non-English speaking backgrounds with homework, acquiring study skills, reading, writing and speaking skills, as well as using resources provided by MARSS.

PASS operates from MARSS' Civic Office on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from 3:30 to 6:30pm. There is also a PASS outreach program in Belconnen from 4 to 5:30pm. Clients benefit greatly from the PASS program and all the support provided by the volunteer tutors.



## PASS SUCCESS STORIES

To celebrate the end of term 2, PASS students took a trip to the cinemas on the 11th of July. We're very proud of our students who are graduating! They left us some comments about how the program has helped during their studies.





## JIN JANG

"The teachers are very kind. They always try to teach carefully, truly, sincerely and their advices are correct. I wish to thank them from the bottom of my heart and it was the best opportunity to know this program. And there were some delicious snacks to work my brain. Writing essays and reports is the main homeworks, so there are lots of grammatically wrong things to fix. A teacher taught it and it was helpful. Also I have some questions in math. A teacher explains how the formula is made and how to solve the questions."

# NEW & UPCOMING PROGRAMS

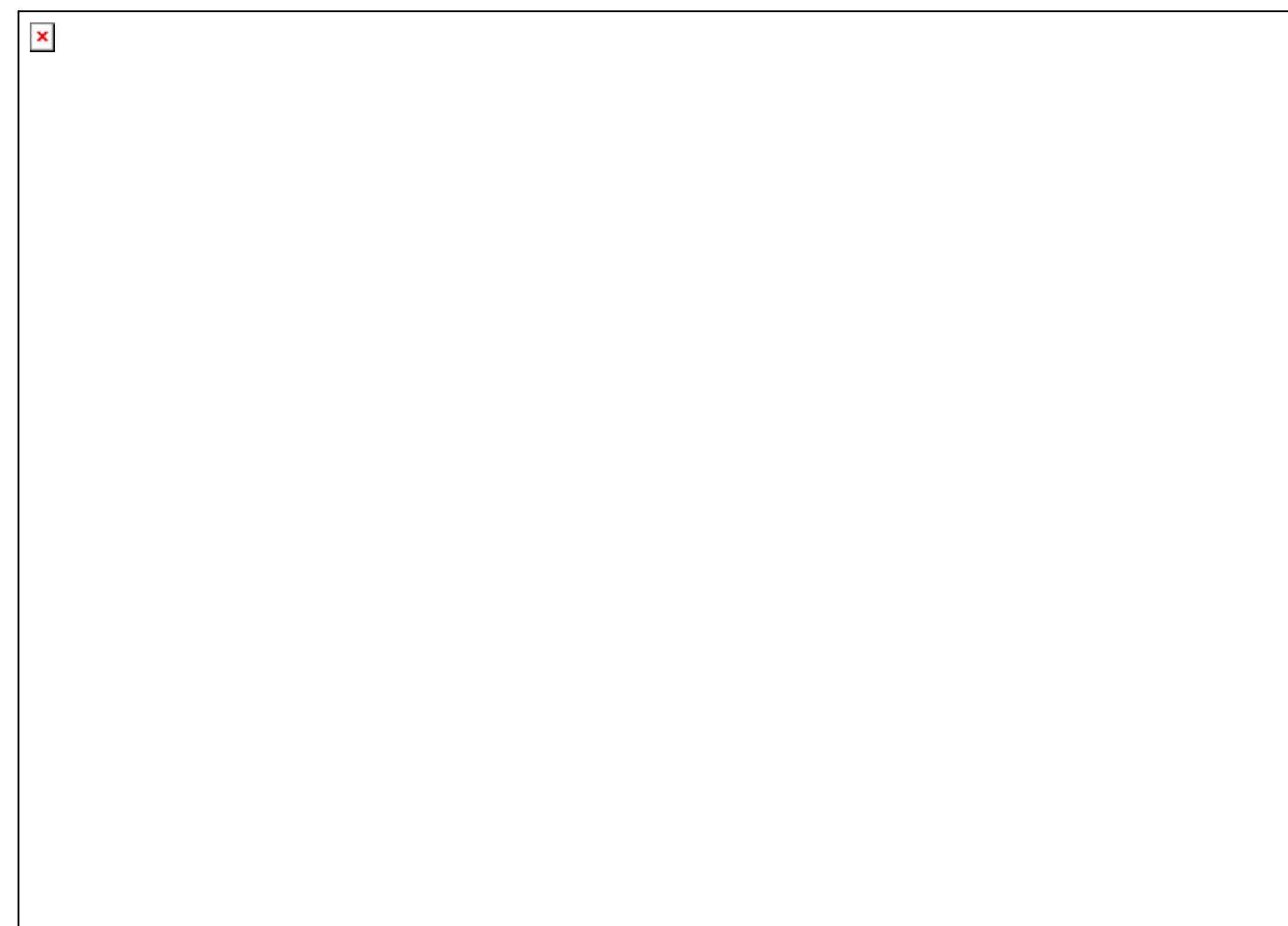
## DIGITAL LITERACY

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, Australia's aged population has increased by 20% since 2010 and according to the record, there are currently 3.2 million mature aged workers across Australia. MARSS understands an ageing population brings difficulties that seniors and mature aged workers face with reskilling, reintegration back into employment and ensuring that they remain active and productive members in the community.

Our Digital Literacy course seeks to address this by offering 6 week long courses to equip seniors and mature aged workers with the knowledge and skills to access and use these online services. Participants in the course will each receive a tablet to learn and develop their new skills. At the end of the course, participants will get to keep their tablet for personal use along with a certificate of participation. MARSS is confident that the Digital Literacy for Seniors and Mature Aged Workers Program will contribute to addressing this gap by providing targeted training.

## INTHIRA

"I like when I have some things or some times I don't understand the words, they help me a lot. [They] always try to teach carefully. They helped me [with] a lot of homework and what I don't understand. I can write easier and also reading easier. Thank you :)"





## STRONG AND RESILIENT COMMUNITIES ACTIVITY: MULTICULTURAL LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

This program enhances communication, managerial, business, media, planning and event delivery skills to promote community cohesion, engagement, respect, acceptance, motivation and resilience.

This aims to upskill existing and potential community members from new and emerging migrant communities so they can learn and improve their leadership skills. This will assist them in advocating their needs and interests with local government and other agencies, landlords and businesses to assist individual migrants and their families find employment, education, training and social integration.

If you are an interested member of your community and wish to participate, please contact Madhuri Sharma on [marss@marss.org.au](mailto:marss@marss.org.au)

## CALD NATIONAL INITIATIVES PROGRAM: MEN'S OUTREACH WORKSHOPS

Men can learn about the importance of positive family relationships and how to prevent and combat domestic and family violence through community awareness and education at the Men's Outreach Workshops Program delivered by MARSS. This program is funded by the Department of Social Services in their National Initiatives Program.



If you are  
interested in  
registering please  
contact Andrew  
Kazar at  
[cdp@marss.org.a](mailto:cdp@marss.org.a)

## EMPOWERING WOMEN FOR ACTION TOWARDS ZERO TOLERANCE

The perpetration of domestic and family violence reflects the historical inequality between men and women, and services should reflect its gendered nature. 1 in 6 Australian women experienced violence from a current/former partner, and there are 3 times as many female victims than male victims of domestic violence related assaults in the ACT. The National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women survey found 87% of respondents from Iraq, Burma, Bhutan, Afghanistan and Ethiopia didn't know domestic violence is a criminal offence in Australia. Women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds face specific barriers to breaking the DV cycle and seeking support.





MARSS will provide a space for them to share, empower and celebrate autonomy in the form of a production. Through traditional dance, storytelling, poetry, music and film we will showcase the dreams, strength and resilience of women to the public. To break the stereotype that DV is endorsed by any culture, the production will use cultural deities, folk heroines and political or community female icons to illustrate how women have been recognised for their strengths in all cultures. Agencies that focus on domestic violence will present information sessions on what domestic and family violence is, forms it can take, services available, when and how to get help, risks associated, Australian law and order, respectful relationships and how to prevent domestic violence to start conversations within their communities to produce long-lasting change. MARSS would like to thank Minister Berry for the opportunity to address the issue of domestic through the Women's Grant by the ACT Government. Keep an eye out for the start date of this program.



# JOIN MARSS AS A MEMBER

## Associate membership (Individuals)

- Can enjoy the benefits and resources of MARSS
- Can access the MARSS meeting and computer rooms during office hours

## Full membership

- Can enjoy all the above benefits plus nominate members to become a part of MARSS board

## See our website for more details on membership.

- Membership applications are on the MARSS website or can be collected from the MARSS office in Civic and Queanbeyan
- Membership fee on a yearly basis: \$5
- Membership fee for 3 years: \$10

# FREE SERVICES AT MARSS

- ◇ Connect to Legal Aid
- ◇ Connect to Tax Help
- ◇ Access to Interpreting Services
- ◇ Access to a Computer Room



# UPCOMING EVENTS

The first half of 2018 was very busy for us, but we still have a number of exciting events planned for the rest of the year. To see if you are able join us please contact reception on (02) 6248 5777 or [marss@marss.org.au](mailto:marss@marss.org.au) .

## MULTICULTURAL LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Friday

Theo Notaras Multicultural Centre

31st August

Level 2, 180 London Circuit, Canberra, ACT

4:30-8:30pm

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Wednesday

Theo Notaras Multicultural Centre

10th October

Level 2, 180 London Circuit, Canberra, ACT

6-8pm

## MEN'S OUTREACH WORKSHOP

Saturday

Function Hall, Theo Notaras Multicultural Centre

27th October

Level 2, 180 London Circuit, Canberra, ACT

10am-2:30pm

## MULTICULTURAL MATTERS MEETING (MuMaMe)

Wednesday

Function Hall, Theo Notaras Multicultural Centre

21st November

Level 2, 180 London Circuit, Canberra, ACT

2-5:30pm

## WHITE RIBBON DAY

Thursday

Theo Notaras Multicultural Centre

23rd November

Level 2, 180 London Circuit, Canberra, ACT

2-5pm

## CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION

Thursday

Theo Notaras Multicultural Centre

20th December

Level 2, 180 London Circuit, Canberra, ACT

4-8pm



## MIGRANT AND REFUGEE SETTLEMENT SERVICES of the ACT Inc.

Theo Notaras Multicultural Centre

2nd Floor, North Building,

180 London Circuit, Canberra, 2601

Phone: (02) 6248 8577

Website: [www.marss.org.au](http://www.marss.org.au)

Email: [marss@marss.org.au](mailto:marss@marss.org.au)